



COUNTY OF LAKE
COUNTY ASSESSOR-RECORDER

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Lakeport, California 95453
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RICHARD A. FORD
ASSESSOR-RECORDER

August 22, 2023

County of Lake, Honorable Members of the Grand Jury,

First, thank you for your service and interest in the Assessor-Recorder's office. I think it is important to describe the work of the office for clarification. Since the report was focused on the Assessor's office, I will only describe the duties of the Assessor's office.

The Assessor is charged with applying and administering all the rules and laws, as they pertain to property tax in the State of California. This means we apply these rules and come to a valuation of the property at a particular point in time, usually the sale of a property. The office does not send out tax bills, place direct charges (e.g., school bonds), or collect property taxes. These duties are the responsibility of the Treasurer-Tax Collector or the Auditor-Controller.

In response to your request, I would like to clarify the findings F-2 and F-5 and respond to the R-1 recommendation.

F-2 and R-1: The Assessor's office has not turned phones off during my tenure. We also have no intention of turning the phones off in the future. Our office hours are 8 am – 5 pm Monday through Friday and our phones are open during office hours. We answer phones as quickly as we can. Calls from customers is part of the normal operations of the Assessor's office and apart from key time frames during the year the office has a regular, steady flow of phone calls. These key time frames are when tax bills are sent and near dates for payment of property tax.

F-5: From the description in the Grand Jury report, it is unclear whether this finding was directed at the Treasurer-Tax Collector or the Assessor. Therefore, we will elaborate on the progress in the Assessor's office. When I took office, I felt it would take ten years to rebuild and reduce the backlog. Most of the backlog has been reduced. We feel the 10-year forecast is still on track.

Thank you again for interest in our office and I hope this helped with clarification.

Sincerely,

Richard Ford
Assessor-Recorder
County of Lake, CA